

## Hungry like the Wolf by edgy\_fluffball

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**Summary:**

Billy is new in Hawkins, the one place where humans and supernatural beings live together in one community.

He knows a witch and her familiar, and the local police chief is a dragon - but why are there no dangerous monsters like vampires or werewolves? Except there are.

And why can Billy all of a sudden feel a tingling that makes him want to crawl out of his skin?

# Hungry like the Wolf

## Author's Note:

This is my third contribution to the Harringrove playing card challenge on tumblr.

This time I drew: Queen of Spades - Supernatural or noir AU with a uniform or some kind of predicting the future

3 of Spades - Nancy.

I hope it turned into something readable.

Billy hadn't left the new house throughout the two weeks they had lived there before starting school in Hawkins. He had given up on trying to get out of his senior year at a new school, his father had insisted he finished his education. They had moved to Hawkins because his father had decided to start a new business, far away from California. Billy still felt as if they had left the regular world.

His father had explained what made Hawkins so special, 'It's the only settlement in America where humans and Supernaturals live together, where coexistence has evolved into community.'

There had been more, Billy had drowned out his father's explanation of what supernatural beings lived in the small town in Indiana whereto they were moving. If he remembered correctly, the police chief was some kind of guardian dragon who made sure the peace around town was not disturbed by intruders or troublemakers. He had asked his father if he knew every species that inhabited Hawkins and if there were wizards and witches. The answer, 'How would I know?' had not satisfied him but the anger about having to transfer schools had prompted him to stay inside for the two weeks that remained of his summer holidays. Max had explored the town on her own but his step-sister had been a free spirit ever since he had gotten to know her.

'Billy, get up – we need to get to school,' Max pounded on his door and ran downstairs.

Billy sat up, the blanket slid from his shoulders and onto the ground. Groaning, he followed it, finding himself resting against the bed frame. She was right, they did need to get to school, and he would have to drop her off at the Middle School around the corner.

‘Billy!’

He pulled a shirt on and raked his fingers through his hair once before leaving his room and joining the rest of the family for a piece of toast against the counter. Max seemed riled up enough to bounce off a wall. Once Billy had washed down the dry bread with a gulp of coffee he got his bag and walked to the door.

‘Billy,’ his father looked up from his newspaper, ‘this is a chance for all of us. You will not disappoint me, son!’

Billy nodded and left, exhaling sharply through the nose. He had less than ten seconds before Max started yelling because he took too long. Getting into the car he realized that he had missed driving it around. He stepped onto the gas and sped down the road, towards the school.

‘Do you think there will be Supernaturals in our classes?’ Max still vibrated with anticipation, stared out of the window, and bit her nails.

‘Don’t do that! And yes, there is only one school in Hawkins so I guess they’re teaching everybody in the same building.’

Max still looked unsure when they pulled into the parking lot.

‘Hey Max – it’s gonna be okay,’ Billy felt the need to reassure her, and a bit himself, that the school would be at least as good as the one they had attended in California.

‘Sure it will,’ Max smiled faintly before climbing out of the car and stalking off.

Billy still took another moment before he grabbed his bag and opened the car door.

For a moment he had to reach back and steady himself against the car. As soon as he had gotten up something had knocked the air out

of his lungs, leaving him without a breath to take. His skin was crawling, tingling, as if he had a full-body goosebump.

Still, taking a few breaths after the initial shock, helped. The feeling, however, did not fade, he could feel the wind on his skin, and it made him suck in air harshly. The sun shining down on him, the soft breeze, even the cloth of his denim jacket against his arms left him shivering and his nerve endings on fire.

He hated it.

The only time he had experienced something similar, was when he had the flu and couldn't even bear the feeling of the blanket on his oversensitive skin.

Except the feeling was still there when he entered the school and walked down the hall towards the headmaster's office. It stayed with him through the whole 'Welcome to Hawkins High' talk and had him wishing for a shower to calm down. Getting to class seemed almost like a relief – for a moment. When he opened the class room door his breathing was erratic again.

He felt it in waves, rushing up to him, and retreating after a moment, letting him breathe. As he looked around the room he noticed difference in the strength of the energy around him. Billy tried to sense where the surge was the least aggressive by moving around in the classroom. It gave him the opportunity to scan the faces of his new classmates at the same time. At least one of them was obviously supernatural, the boy had scales covering his neck all the way down underneath his shirt. Another girl looked at him with deep purple eyes, turned to another student and hissed something in her general direction. Both turned back around and stared at Billy.

'Hi, is this spot free?' he set his bag down on the table and looked at the boy busy drawing in his notepad.

The air around him seemed surprisingly still.

'Yeah, sure. Have a seat,' the boy moved a few of his things off the second half of the table, 'Are you new?'

‘I’m Billy. I moved here a few weeks back. Are you familiar with the people around here?’

The boy looked up at him, rolled his eyes, and turned away.

‘You are like everybody else. There are six Supernaturals in this class, that’s what you wanted to know, right?’

Billy sat down, no longer wanting to talk to his new seat neighbour.

He survived the first two periods without groaning out in discomfort, although every move that had him touch anything sent shivers down his spine. During recess he leaned against a wall and tried to concentrate on his breathing. He still looked around the court yard and tried to figure out who was supernatural. At some point he needed to find out if it was offensive for him to ask whether someone was supernatural.

‘Hello. You are Billy Hargrove!’ a petite, dark-haired girl had walked up to him, stuck out her hand, and smiled at him, ‘Nancy Wheeler, nice to meet you. We need to talk.’

‘Excuse me?’ Billy pushed himself off the wall and frowned at her, ‘Do we know each other?’

‘I know you, which should be enough for the moment. Come on, I don’t have all day!’

She turned around and stalked off, not looking back. The way she had looked at him – as if she knew something he did not – it intrigued him. She had something about her that made her seem quite assertive. They stopped behind the gym.

‘Billy Hargrove – you are a curious case. The most curious I have seen in years, I guess it lured me in. But enough of that, tell me how you’re holding up,’ the girl sat down, patted the ground next to her, and proceeded to cross her arms over her chest.

‘Holding up with what exactly?’

‘Your first day here, the overstimulation, and the confusion – you could speak about that, for a starter...’

Billy flinched away from her.

‘Oh, I did mention I’m a psychic witch, right? Sorry, I keep forgetting you are new in town. From the top then; I am Nancy Wheeler, I am a psychic witch and I have sensed something off about you from the moment you stepped out of your car this morning. You were tense and your energy levels were off. You experienced overstimulation, didn’t you? In fact, you are experiencing it right now!’

A slender hand gripped Billy’s wrist, he hissed out because yes, the overstimulation was still a thing he experienced. Nancy smiled up at him.

‘See?’ her face lit up with this smile, ‘I can answer you some of your questions, not all of them because then I would break my own rules – I cannot tell everybody everything I know, right?’

‘Just tell me what you can tell me!’ Billy sighed and leaned back against the wall.

‘You sense Sups.’

‘Pardon me?’

‘Sups, that’s what we call ourselves, Supernaturals. And you can actually sense us, you feel the energy we emit. I cannot tell you why, that’s for you to find out. The sensation you feel on your skin is whatever supernatural power people around you,’ Nancy’s hands were waving through the air in front of Billy’s face.

‘No, I don’t – that only started this morning, at school!’

The next thing that happened was Nancy clutching his chin.

‘You didn’t leave the house, of course you didn’t feel anything there – and then there’s your car...’

‘What about my car?’ Billy slowly felt like he was missing a point.

‘Faradaic cage. It keeps the energy of a lightning bolt out of it, why not supernatural energy as well? Now tell me, does your skin still tingle?’

‘Uhm,’ Billy closed his eyes for a moment, ‘No.’

Nancy got up and smiled even wider, ‘I’m shielding you right now. A simple deflection, doesn’t hold up for long and doesn’t cover more than a few square feet...but if you ever need some time off, time without your nerves acting up, you can come to me.’

Billy mumbled, ‘Thank you, I guess.’

‘You’re welcome,’ Nancy walked away and with her the pleasant feeling of dulled nerves.

The tingling re-appeared but at this point he had heard enough from Nancy to have expected it. He took a deep breath and returned to the school building.

Within days he got used to the tingling on his skin. He found out which intensity meant a Sup was in the room with him, what he experienced when there were more in close vicinity to him, and how to enjoy the feeling when walking Hawkins’ streets. It turned into something he liked, something that made him feel slightly special in a town where everything was special.

He felt in place in Hawkins. Being at home still proved to be a test. Ironic, Billy thought, how the one place where his skin wouldn’t tingle was also the one place where everything else happened.

Apparently, he could still hide it well enough. People at school respected him, seemed to like him for who he was. Nancy, the psychic witch, waved at him in the hall and sat with him during recess, usually surrounded by a few other teens that talked too loud. The only one not talking all the time was Jonathan, who seemingly never left her side. Billy didn’t necessarily trust Jonathan – he never spoke and looked at them funny – but at least he didn’t give him the go-by like his seatmate. One of Nancy’s friends had told him, after he

had asked her. Steve Harrington was the closest Hawkins got to an actual outsider. He didn't have people who talked to him, except Nancy from time to time. Apparently, he had never been different, at least that was what people said about Steve Harrington. Billy had given up on getting the other boy to talk to him, instead he sat next to him, took notes, and ignored Steve as much as possible.

At some point, Billy stopped to wake up and count the days he had spent in Hawkins. Nancy mentioned throwing him a one-month-party but all Billy did was laugh and shake his head. The days in Hawkins seemed to be golden. Billy got to be popular at school, Max seemed to be flourishing at the new school with her new friends – pretty much all of them human – and came home humming and singing.

That was until Billy was woken up by his own cries of pain one morning. At first, it felt tingly, then it hit him all at once. Once he had opened his eyes entirely it was like something had been injected into his veins that made him burn from the inside. When his alarm went off he realized that his arms were too heavy to lift them, even rolling over to silence it by knocking it over seemed to take up too much energy he didn't have. He groaned, whimpered, and rolled out of his bed. Every muscle in his body was sore and cramped, causing him to fall to his knees once he was dressed. This wasn't normal, he was at home, there were no Sups around, and his skin wasn't buzzing, for that matter. Instead it seemed to tighten, Billy felt constricted in his movements, and every breath became a task to be fulfilled by providing an awful lot of energy. He bit through it, though, because that was what he did. He had a bowl of cereal for breakfast which he emptied slowly and without big movements, drove Max to school and got out of the car, every inch of his body hurting and burning him up. A few people greeted him, Billy managed a smile but dodged every attempted conversation.

He entered the classroom, dropped his bag, and sat down. There was no shift, no variation in the pain; it enveloped him like a heavy blanket that had only the purpose to make him hurt. Billy drew in a few short breaths, it hurt to try and get air into his lungs but he had to fight through it. With every passing second the pain got worse, he felt as if a giant held him in his hand and closed his fist around him.



Billy tried to straighten up but the muscles on his back were too tense to let him do anything but curl up into a ball and cry. The realization made him shudder. It seemed that his body was trying to tell him something he could not translate. He had to get through this, there was no scenario that would allow him to get out of class.

With the sound of the bell Billy pushed himself out of his seat, biting back a groan as he felt a shooting pain down his spine. The intensity of it had him gasp for air, he left the room with his arms wrapped around his torso. Someone walked past him, knocking into him with a shoulder. Billy recognized Steve Harrington by the back of his head, and frowned. Before he could get the stupid idea to confront the other boy, however, he felt how the pain slowly increased, like the volume was turned up on a record player. Tears stung in his eyes and he could feel his fingers tremble as he made his way down the hall, towards Nancy's locker.

She was already waiting for him.

'There you are! What is going on with you, I could see pain – are you injured?' Nancy was already running her fingers down Billy's arm, making him groan and flinch back.

'I don't know, no, I'm not injured, it just hurts like a bitch!' Billy shot her a dark look, 'This is not normal. I've become used to the funny feeling of Supernaturals but this is different! I'm in fucking pain, Nance! It doesn't feel right and...I feel like I have a fever and I'm in downright pain!'

He felt helpless like this, every movement hurting, forcing him to walk hunched and hold himself upright. He didn't like feeling like this at all, and Nancy's inquiring look at him didn't make it better. Her hands were now hovering over his shoulders without touching him, palms turned towards him. Her eyelids fluttered shut as she mumbled a few words in a language he didn't know.

'We will need to suppress that,' Nancy stepped back, her expression serious, 'this is only going to get worse and we don't want that. No, no, no, we really don't want that.'

She reached into her locker and pulled a vial out of a small wooden

cabinet she kept in there. The liquid in it shimmered in a pale reddish purple and smelled of valerian. Nancy handed it to him and smiled encouragingly at him.

‘Better take this before it gets worse and even more painful. Oh this is bad, this is really bad!’

Billy cleared his throat before he took the vial. It fit his hand perfectly and seemed warmer than a sole glass object should be.

‘Don’t worry,’ Nancy pulled the stopper out of the vial and pushed his hand upwards, ‘This is a pain-relieving potion I brewed yesterday, call it a hunch. Drink it and you are better within minutes.’

Billy emptied the vial and shuddered. ‘I thought it would taste nicer.’

‘It’s a potion, not juice! Now go away, I have other business than you figuring out your identity,’ Nancy waved him off, ‘Damn full moon will have you hit the ceiling as well!’

If Billy had not been occupied with the state of his skin and muscles, he might have asked her about that remark but as it was there was little else on his mind but when the potion would start to work. It did right about the moment he re-entered the classroom for his English literature class. Most of the chairs were already taken again, Billy returned to his seat next to Steve Harrington. The boy had rested his head on his arms, face hidden in the crook of his arm. He seemed to have closed his eyes as well, prompting Billy to sit down carefully in order to not disturb him. The air around Steve seemed to have thickened, as if there was a cloud of negativity surrounding him. Billy got ready for the class but Steve still lay on the table. Since he hadn’t moved at all, Billy gave him a soft nudge. The reaction he received, surprised him.

‘Take your hands off of me!’ Steve slapped his hand to the side, suddenly tense and with one arm held up in front of him in a defensive position, ‘What do you think you are doing?’

‘I thought you were asleep,’ Billy brushed his hair out of his eyes, ‘Anyway, class is about to start.’

He turned back around and concentrated on what their teacher said about the book they had been meant to read. Steve's shoulders were still drawn up and he had one hand clenched into a fist, the other one held a pen tight enough for the knuckles to appear white. For one moment Billy wanted to ask him if he was alright, if he had a rough night or if something else had happened that had upset him.

'Stop staring,' Steve hissed and proceeded to glare at Billy, 'If you are really that bored during class, find something that will actually appreciate your attention.'

'I wasn't staring, I was thinking.'

'Looked like you had hurt yourself.'

For a moment, Billy stopped himself from answering to listen to his body. The relief when he realized that the pain, that had kept him on edge the whole morning, was gone left him breathless. Another thought crossed his mind, a thought that made him smile to himself.

'That's the most you have ever said to me, seat mate.'

Steve turned away with a huff, burying his face in the crook of his arm again. Billy grinned, letting himself enjoy the moment of having shut up Steve and his loner behaviour. Also, his head was clear again and he could think without the splitting pain clouding his mind. Whilst the teacher repeated something Billy had already learned at his old school, he thought about what Nancy had said about the full moon. There had been a suggestion of him not being the only one who experienced this strange oversensitivity or pain, induced by whatever supernatural thing was going on. He wondered if Nancy made some money by selling her potions to hurting Sups and humans. Maybe there was a supernatural being that was hurt and he had sensed their pain? He felt oddly unsatisfied with the answers Nancy had given him, he wanted to know what exactly he could sense and why there was this sudden change in the way he had experienced his sensory overstimulation that morning.

What confused him even more was his waking up the next day with everything back to normal. There was no tingling skin inside the house, and no pain that drove him mad. Instead, he woke up in a

good mood, cooked pancakes for Max and himself, and got ready with a lot of time to spare.

‘What’s up with you?’ Max looked at him disbelieving, as if Billy being actually on time for once was a sign for the apocalypse.

Billy made her finish her pancakes completely before leaving for school. On the way there he played loud music in his car that emphasized the good mood he was in. He sang along, Max joined in and when they arrived at the school they had a few minutes left to finish listen to “Jump”. When they needed to get out and made their way towards their respective schools, Max hugged his waist fleetingly before running off. Billy felt the smile spread on his face. He had grown to like Max once he had been past the step-siblings thing, and trying to be a good older brother had made him a better person. He slung his bag over his shoulder whilst watching her greet her little friends.

‘Morning Nance,’ he joined Nancy and Jonathan at their lockers.

‘Your head is better. You have another month with nothing but the usual.’

‘Thanks Nance.’

‘Just the usual,’ Jonathan ran one finger down Billy’s arm, making him squirm, ‘You could totally use that thing you have to your advantage.’

‘How am I gonna use oversensitivity to my advantage?’ Billy got his books and stuffed them into his bag.

Jonathan grinned, ‘Imagine being with someone. You could feel so much more and react to anybody’s needs much quicker and –’

‘Jonathan,’ Nancy had placed one hand on the boy’s forearm and smiled at him sweetly, ‘that is quite enough. Training your gift, however, will allow you to track down Sups.’

‘Nancy, I know you don’t like being asked for favours – but you also say stuff like that without explanation and right now I feel like you just suggested I will track down Sups. Why? How? Can you please tell

me what you mean by that?’

Nancy sighed, took his and Jonathan’s hand in one of hers and closed her eyes.

‘What is she doing?’ Billy asked, slightly baffled by the urgency with which his skin started to tingle more intensively and the way Nancy’s eyes still moved although she had closed them.

Jonathan sighed and nodded towards their hands, ‘She sees. Right now, here, for you. Boy, you are a friend, alright.’

‘How –‘

‘She channels energy and either speaks a spell or reads what this energy lets her see. In this case, she will look into your stamp on this world and read what there is to come. In a way, she does the same thing you could do: find the special energy of any person and track it down. Only she does it in the past, present, and future.’

‘Why is she holding your hand as well?’

Jonathan shot him a look that held a bitter irritation that was so far from the indifference typical for the other boy that Billy felt like taking a step back instinctively. The hallway was still filled with students but no one minded the three teenagers standing together like they did.

Then, Jonathan exhaled slowly, shrugging an invisible weight off his shoulders he looked up at Billy in resignation, ‘I am her familiar. The energy she channels – it’s mine and hers combined. She doesn’t need me for small spells, but something like this takes up more than brewing a potion or moving objects around.’

‘I...I’m sorry, Jonathan, I thought you were dating,’ Billy felt himself blush.

‘Oh yes, we are,’ Jonathan grinned, ‘we are. She doesn’t like to show it in public because most people here in Hawkins know about the familiar-situation and the Sups at least know that familiars and their witches are bonding really close, some may even disapprove of it. That’s why she initially turned me down when I asked her out. She

said I would only be thinking I liked her because of our connection.'

'Go Jonathan,' Billy grinned, 'but also, why is everyone speaking to me all of a sudden? Yesterday, Steve talks and finishes two sentences, now you are talkative as shit all of a sudden...'

He didn't miss the way Jonathan looked at Nancy and for a moment he could not imagine how Nancy hadn't seen the pure trust and love the boy felt for her. A moment later, Jonathan's expression changed into something else, defensive even. Billy looked over his shoulder.

'Hi there, Harrington,' since Jonathan didn't seem to mean to acknowledge Steve standing behind them, Billy smiled at him and nodded a greeting, 'You coming to join the circle as well? Did you know that our cute, human Billy can sense Sups. He might even be able to track them!'

Steve looked from him to Jonathan, then to Nancy and their joined hands. A hard line appeared around his mouth as he fixated them.

'Him as well, Jonathan? How many people will end up knowing, will you at least tell me before ruining everything?'

'He doesn't know, Steve, calm down. Nancy is tracking his future, that's all. You should really get in control of your temper sometime soon,' Jonathan tapped his toes, moving ever so slightly behind Nancy with only his arm stretched out, 'How are you doing, by the way?'

Steve downright snarled. Billy's head whipped back around at the sound because for a moment he expected a rabid dog to have appeared behind him. Instead, it was just Steve. Steve, with the muscles in his neck so taut that muscle cords were showing in hard lines through the skin. He had bared his teeth and held his arms by his sides in an ambush position, watching their every move. Billy looked over at Jonathan who had now halfway disappeared behind Nancy.

'Steve, come on, you know Nance and I promised, you can trust us, for fuck's sake. Remember when we helped you out? And how we are still doing that? I know today is hard for you but you have to

concentrate, Steve!’

Billy had been very sure that Steve’s eyes were blue but in the neon light of the hallway they appeared black more than anything else. He also had been sure that he was brave but when Steve stepped forward, he no less took a step back, unintentionally pulling his hand from Nancy’s grip.

Her gasp for breath let them all halt. Jonathan was by her side before she could even open her eyes, Billy stared at her shaking hands, and Steve stood as still as a statue. Nancy blinked once or twice before looking straight at Billy.

‘You changed your mind. At some point whilst I was looking, it changed, you decided to change something! What happened?’

‘Except Harrington going crazy?’

Nancy looked sternly at Steve who was no longer resembling a predator but looked at her with regret and sorrow in his eyes. A small nod from her made him turn and walk away. Billy found himself staring after him with his mouth hanging open. Steve was leaving with his shoulders slouched and his head hanging. It was only on second glance that he noticed the limp Steve was walking with. He hadn’t seen him doing that before and the concern for the other boy he had felt earlier, when he had realized how tired and worn out he looked, flared up again.

‘Honestly, what’s the matter with him?’ Billy fell in step with Nancy and Jonathan as they started to walk down the hall, ‘Yesterday he seemed perfectly normal – if this brooding loner thing is perfectly normal for him, that is. Has he always been like that?’

Nancy opened the door to a supply cabinet and shoved them in. Billy felt a broomstick poke at his back and groaned out in discomfort.

‘Billy, I am so sorry!’

‘For what?’

‘I told you something about your future changed. Thing is, I don’t know how it will influence what comes next. I could see you track

down a Sup, I could see you helping a person dear to you. You will have to face that. And you will make a choice – but then I lost it...I'm sorry.'

Jonathan wrapped one arm around Nancy and held her close. For a moment he look accusingly at Billy who stood rooted to the spot. He then turned around to cup Nancy's face. The kiss he pressed onto her lips let Billy's skin tingle again.

'Did you just transfer –'

'- supernatural energy? Yes. It would drain Nancy otherwise, I'm functioning as her battery,' Jonathan explained it with an easiness that led Billy to believe that he had had to explain their special relationship more than enough before.

'That is the coolest thing I have heard today,' Billy sighed, 'I'll leave you to it – I guess I have classes to get to – and I should maybe think about what you said, Nance. Thank you so much for what you just did for me, I will figure out what is going on with me...and what is going to happen.'

'You should,' Jonathan laughed, 'You are so blind it's laughable. No wonder Steve freaked out.'

Billy ran off, head spinning with everything Jonathan had told him. He still hadn't understood it all but with time, he promised himself, he would get the hang of it.

It was Max who tipped him off. She sat at the table one afternoon when he came home, her head propped up in her hand. The book in front of her looked as if it had seen better times. Billy recognized it as his own book about legends and myths, a book he had gotten for his seventh birthday.

'Isn't it funny?' She closed the book with a 'whack' and looked up at her brother.

'What is?'



‘You have the whole of Hawkins and its inhabitants, both human and supernatural, and yet there are limits.’

‘Limits? What do you mean by that?’

Max opened the book to one particular page and showed it to Billy.

‘None of these live here. But if there are witches and fairies and stuff – why not them?’

Billy scanned the page quickly, raising an eyebrow at what he saw.

‘Vampires, werewolves, wendigo – why are you reading this? Don’t you have homework to do or places to be? Is that book that interesting?’

Max tapped her foot impatiently, ‘I heard the howl a few days back. There is nothing in Hawkins that could have made that sound, even Hopper’s dragon noise is different, so I got the book from the library to draw a chart of all supernatural beings here. I was going to match them to a howling beast but there is nothing that could have been what I heard!’

Billy read a few paragraphs on werewolves, it told him how to kill one, recognize one, and how to prevent ever meeting one during a full moon night. Max looked at him with caution in her eyes as if he would laugh at her. Laughing, however, was the last thing Billy thought of when he returned the book to Max.

‘I don’t think it’s a werewolf,’ he said, ‘Hawkins is full of lunatics and weird people, but living with a werewolf close by? That is too dangerous, even these lunatics won’t allow that!’

Max put on her stubborn face, ‘But it was a full moon and I heard a howl at night! There has to be something, I know it!’

‘I’m telling you, they would be too dangerous to keep around,’ Billy saw the look on her face, a mixture of disappointment and relief, ‘So anyway, if there were werewolves or vampires here, I would protect you like the good big brother I am!’

Max hugged him, something he still hadn’t gotten used to. His step-

sister ran off, the book tucked safely under her arm, leaving Billy behind to think about the possibility of more dangerous beings living in Hawkins.

Nancy was the next to approach him on the matter. Followed closely by Jonathan, she smiled at Billy carefully before handing him a vial with the purple potion. Her big eyes watched him closely.

‘You will need it this Friday. You might opt to not drink all of it. Half of it will drown out the pain but will keep your tracking sense working. And you need that. Keep the rest for...later,’ Nancy evaded his looks, seemingly not willing to acknowledge the questions he had.

And questions he had when he woke up the following Friday with his skin crawling and a burning feeling in his veins. He chugged half of the potion Nancy had given him and left his room once it operated. As she had promised, he didn’t feel the pain anymore but could still sense the supernatural students when he pulled up in front of the school and opened the car door. This time, when he sought out Nancy, he was determined to get answers.

‘How did you know, Nancy? How did you know I would need that fucking potion today?’

‘Psychic, you remember?’

‘No, Nancy, that doesn’t work today! I want to know what is going on with me, and I want to know what is up with this town – I’m not stupid, both today and last time are days with a full moon, is that coincidence or not? I researched Sups connected to the full moon and there aren’t that many,’ Billy felt himself growing agitated, ‘So please tell me, Nancy, I think I deserve to know if it is connected to me! Is it vampires? Werewolves?’

‘Look at that, Nance, he gets awfully lose, doesn’t he?’ Jonathan chipped in and patted Billy on the back, ‘Getting close to the hidden Hawkins –’

Billy took a step back in surprise. Jonathan had disappeared from one

second to the next, making space for a small kitten sitting on the floor. It seemed to be pouting.

‘Don’t worry,’ Nancy caught Billy’s gaze, ‘I do that more often than you’d think. He’ll turn back. Or his brother will transform him later, one of those. Point is, however, that he was speaking without thinking. We promised not to tell and I don’t intend that promise! Please respect that!’

‘You are telling me there is more than the witches, wizards, and fairies? There is someone potentially dangerous?’ Billy turned his head around, focussing on the students around them as the tingling flared up again on his skin.

He let himself sniff out the energy in the hallway. Over the two months he had stayed in Hawkins, he had trained to find out about the differences. Jonathan and Nay had been his test objects at first but he had learned to distinguish between different supernatural species, and even single people. At this point he could sense a witch, a few fairies, two nymphs, and a shapeshifter. There was something else at the edge of the spectrum that he didn’t know and it made his senses ring.

‘We have a dragon in town, Billy,’ Nancy scooped Jonathan up into her arms to prevent him being trampled to death by students.

‘Yes, but Hopper is here to protect everyone!’

‘Do you really think he doesn’t know? Because he does and he takes care of everything. There is no risk, all who know work closely together to make the situation safe!’

‘You included, I guess. You know an awful lot about this situation, Nancy. Thank you for telling me what you told me, though,’ Billy turned around and left for class.

The tingling at the corner of his conscience stayed there the whole time he was at school. Being unable to identify the person that made him feel so uneasy, and even in pain if it wasn’t for Nancy’s potion, left him feeling helpless. His own curiosity demanded to know what caused this monthly distress. Adding to this, Nancy’s attempt at an

explanation had not satisfied his need to know what exactly was there to know about the one Supernatural that bent the rules of Hawkins society. Billy drove to the little diner after school with his step-sister, determined to talk to Max about her own suspicions and all possibilities she had come up with.

He told her about his gift first, the oversensitivity he felt whenever he came across a Supernatural within eighty feet, and the way he had trained to distinguish between species. At this point, Max interrupted him.

‘Doesn’t it make school very hard for you? You must feel them all the time,’ her clear eyes drilled into his mind, making it hard for him to lie.

‘Yes, I can sense them at any time. I have learned how to deal with it, most of the time it’s nothing more than that,’ he knows it sounds more dramatic than it is and Max shuffles her feet in the legroom of the car, looking uneasy, ‘Once a month, however, I experience episodes of...pain. Nancy and Jonathan linked it to the full moon and something special about it in a way, but now I am at a loss.’

‘Billy – today is a full moon!’

‘I know. Nancy gave me a potion to drown out the pain. She also gave me a glimpse into my future, and apparently I will have to decide. She said I will track down a Sup and help a person dear to me. If that is the case, I don’t know what tonight could bring. I just want to find out what is lurking in Hawkins during the full moon because I can sense it but can’t tell what it is. You said you had theories?’

‘Yes,’ Max dug around in her school bag for the library book, ‘Werewolf is still my strongest suspicion, even though you didn’t believe me. It adds up with full moons and the howl I heard that night.’

Billy frowned. The thought of a werewolf in Hawkins didn’t appeal to him, even less now that he knew Hopper and Nancy were involved. Hopper, police chief and guardian dragon, and Nancy, resident witch and psychic, working together to hide someone’s dark secret.

‘Okay, let’s say your theory is correct and it is a werewolf,’ Billy drank a sip of his milkshake, ‘why do I sense it only on full moons, and in pain? Where is it the rest of the time? Do you have an explanation for that as well?’

Max played with her straw for a moment, eyes cast downward. Then, she lifted her head back up again, eyes gleaming with the fire of an idea, ‘I know why. It’s possible, at least.’

‘Yes? Come on, brat, tell me!’

‘Werewolves are supernatural, yes. But the only time they are anything but plainly human is when they turn. And that is –‘

‘– on a full moon! Genius, Max – I can’t sense them because they are human except for one day when they undergo something so crass and significant that it forces itself onto my senses! Who knows why I can do that in the first place, but your theory is absolutely conclusive. How did I not think of that? It sounds so plausible once you hear it! And because it is so strong it can get to me even when I’m in my car,’ Billy ruffled his sister’s hair and sighed, ‘that could have been easier. Why didn’t Nancy and Jonathan just tell me?’

‘You mentioned a promise? That Nancy helps keep the secret? If she is involved in a magical way it is very likely for Jonathan to also be a part of this. And taken into consideration that they might have done that for years by now, it might be they grew closer to the werewolf, and maybe even became friends with them.’

Billy leaned back and look at Max. He was proud of her and her quick thinking, prouder than he would ever admit because that would damage both their reputations. Instead he hurried her to finish up her drink but still promised to take her again soon enough. When she asked why he was in a hurry all of a sudden, he replied he had things to do.

Things to do he had. First, he made sure his father, Max, and Susan would not be home that evening. Once he had fixed them up with movie tickets, he dug around his father’s workshop for anything he

could use in his plan. The last thing he needed to do for his plan to work was a short shopping trip to the grocer. He met Steve there who looked pale in the neon light near the meat counter. One of his hands clutched a shopping list, the other was buried in his coat that seemed too warm for the sunny autumn weather outside.

Billy smiled at the boy. He liked him, all controversies and tiffs aside. Their quiet companionship in classes they shared was something that put Billy at ease even with his skin tingling and the anticipation of whatever was to come with the next full moon. Nancy and Jonathan rarely talked about Steve and whatever his deal was, it was apparent to Billy that they did not wish to share insight about their friend. It had been up to him to sneak glances at Steve who usually appeared to be withdrawn and reserved. The only times he had seen something flare up in Steve had been the few times he had locked horns in the hallway.

Steve, however, didn't respond to Billy's smile in any way other than throwing a quick glance in his direction before stalking off on gawky legs. Billy felt his smile fade. Steve looked small in the oversized coat and his eyes had been empty, without any trace of recognition in them when he had looked at Billy. Something wasn't right and Billy decided to give it a try and find out what was going on – that was, after the full moon was overcome. He bought what he needed and returned to the empty house in anticipation of the evening and the perfect time to start planning.

By the time it started to get dark, Billy sat in his car, driving towards the edge of the wood. He had a spot in mind where he would be able to park the car hidden from looks. Once he was sure that no one would be able to find it, he got everything out of the trunk and started to hike deeper into the forest. Max had speculated the werewolf might turn only when hit by the light of the full moon, meaning that he might be saved from a transformation when it was a cloudy night. Billy had not wanted to believe her but with the darkness fast approaching but clouds covering the moon he could not fail to note that it was quiet all around.

He started to set up his snare. First, he found a spot for himself to hide, at the far side of a clearing where bushes and trees provided a natural barrier. Next, he opened his shopping bag and pulled the

meat out that he had bought earlier. He had to place the bait before he could get started on arranging all the weapons he had gotten from his father's workshop. Laying a track was easy; placing the knives, traps and rifles close enough for him to reach but not hurt himself by accident proved to be a bigger challenge. Eventually, he felt like he had placed everything exactly as it should be.

All he had to do was wait.

As time proceeded the forest grew darker. Billy could see hardly anything but the gleaming steel of a trap and a few splinted branches on the ground. He had found a seat between two tree trunks, one of which seemed to be climbable – in case his plan didn't work out and the werewolf were to attack him. Of course that was the last thing intended, if anything he wanted to get rid of it. Max would not have to live in a town where a dangerous beast, a beast known for killing humans, was tolerated, no matter what Nancy said.

He regretted not to have thought of anything to kill time while he waited. Seconds seemed to last minutes, minutes felt like hours to him. With only one knife clutched in his hand he sat in the darkness under the cloudy sky, with no sounds to listen to but a few nocturnal animals breaking small twigs under their paws and hooves. He could hear owls hoot and racoons quarrel deeper in the woods, to Billy their screams meant that he wasn't alone in the thick of the undergrowth where he was hiding.

The small sounds grew fainter as the owls set off to hunt and the racoons rampaged further in the scrub. Billy leaned back against the tree trunk behind him and enjoyed the moment of silence. It could have been a nice evening if it wasn't for monster hunting.

'So, what are we waiting for?'

Billy spun around, knife blade shimmering in the dark, only to be met by a hand catching his wrist before he could hit the person had sneaked up behind him. He drew in a sharp breath.

'Seriously, what are we waiting for? Or is there another reason for you to sit in the middle of the forest at night?'

Billy stared up at the dark figure that stood over him in the shadow of the tree. He could not imagine knowing the teasing voice that seemed to challenge him in light-hearted humour.

‘What are you doing here?’ he pressed out instead of shoving them away like a deeper buried part of his mind suggested. He turned back around to face the clearing again.

It was only a moment later that he noticed the obvious. His skin had begun to tingle. A Sup was within his reach – his mind jumped to the only conclusion possible. With a swift motion he was on his feet, grabbed the person still standing behind him and dragged them back behind the tree.

‘Okay, I have you know that I am, in fact, waiting for something,’ he hissed and peered past the tree trunk, ‘there are werewolves in Hawkins and I will hunt them. Right now I can’t explain how but I know at least one is coming, so stay back. For your own safety, lunatic!’

Billy drew his knife again and looked around to all the places he had stashed his weapons and traps.

They were nowhere to be seen.

‘You really don’t get it, do you?’ the other one stepped forward a bit and shrugged his coat off. Yes, definitely male, with soft gleaming hair Billy found strangely familiar, ‘There’s just one. And he isn’t as stupid as you thought he’d be.’

With that he stepped past Billy and into the clearing.

Steve Harrington turned around to face him with gleaming eyes. There was no sign of the empty shell Billy had seen earlier, no trace of the boy who was drowning in a winter coat. When he took off his shirt, Billy could have sworn he saw a wide grin plastered on the other’s face, a mixture of pride and pleasant anticipation. For the moment, his brain cells were working overtime to connect the dots spread out in front of him. When they did, however, he scrambled to his feet and backed off until he felt the tree trunk digging into his back.



‘Damn it, Harrington, you are the one who makes me feel like shit once a month?’

With that he seemed to have thrown off the other boy for a second, ‘What do you mean? Aren’t you your cheerful self, poking your nose into everybody else’s business?’

Billy took a few gulps of air. Of course Steve didn’t know about what he was going through. Apparently, Nancy and Jonathan’s promise to keep a secret really meant something. Steve didn’t know about the way Billy’s skin tingled when he brushed up against him by accident in class, Steve didn’t know about how a gust of wind could prompt him to groan because his nerve endings thought something exciting had happened. Steve didn’t know about the pain he shared with Billy before a full moon, although it explained so much.

Steve being the werewolf explained why he shut himself off, didn’t talk, and reacted sensitively on any approach by anyone but Nancy and Jonathan who seemed to have broken the shell around him. It even explained why Steve had looked so frail and broken earlier. It couldn’t be easy to get through the day with the transformation awaiting at night.

A sudden jolt of pain down his spine knocked the air out of his lungs. Something had happened, Billy could feel something claw at his insides, something defied Nancy’s potion and pushed past him to *hurt*.

‘What is happening?’ he demanded and couldn’t keep the fear out of his voice, in an attempt to appear tough he stepped forward and pushed Steve further into the clearing.

The moon light blinded him for a second. The clouds had moved and the full moon broke through, bathing the clearing in its silver light. Billy stilled, watching Steve wide-eyed. The other boy seemed to be frozen in motion, both arms stretched out and standing slightly hunched.

It hit Steve a moment later, when a dark growl made its way out of Steve’s throat. *He was transforming*. A cold shiver ran down his back. He stood in front of a transforming werewolf with nothing but a knife

in his hand and to cap it all, the werewolf was no one else but the one classmate he had found interesting up to the point of being the one he had redeemed fitting enough to go after him.

This thought was erased from his mind when Steve started to move again, shivering and shaking, his bone structure starting to change. Billy opted for safety, turned back to his hiding spot and climbed into the tree he had sought out as an emergency rescue. He thanked whoever was watching over him that night for the easiness with which he pulled himself up onto a branch high enough that no wolf would reach it.

He felt like fainting when he turned around and looked down onto the clearing.

Where Steve had stood, a huge wolf stretched its limbs. It was tall enough to rest its head on Billy's shoulder, for sure. It had fur the colour of Steve's hair, no surprise there, Billy thought. Twigs cracked under its big paws as it took a few careful steps forward, towards the tree Billy had climbed on.

'Oh for fuck's sake,' Billy wrapped an arm around the branch over his head and pulled himself up, not letting the beast – Steve – out of his gaze, 'Why couldn't I just stay at home? Now I'm stuck in a fucking tree, freezing my ass off with a huge furry beast waiting for me to drop down like windfall. Yes, I'm talking about you!'

The werewolf seemed perfectly unfazed by his angry shouting; instead it walked up to the tree, looked up at him, and sat down right in front of the tree. Billy groaned out in annoyance, kicking the trunk since he had no other option to let out the anger about being stuck in an unbelievable situation. Who would get trapped by the werewolf they had wanted to trap, anyway? Billy stared down at the wolf that returned the look curiously. The beast even cocked its head as it realized Billy was looking at it.

This was different from everything Billy had imagined the werewolf to be. He couldn't spot a bloodthirsty monster in these eyes that still looked like Steve's. The wolf tilted its head even further, opened its snout and let its tongue hang out while panting with twitching ears. Billy worried his lower lip with his teeth, biting down almost hard

enough to draw blood. The wolf let out a whine that gave Billy chills for all the wrong reasons.

‘Steve,’ he called down to the ground, ‘howl twice if you want to eat me.’

Billy grinned widely, the wolf now looked perfectly annoyed. He changed the arm that held him on the tree and lowered himself down a bit, still wary of the huge animal on the ground.

‘Okay, let’s do something tricky: bark twice, roll over, and wag your tail seven times if you are aware of who you are, who I am, and that you don’t want to eat me,’ Billy could have sworn the wolf rolled its eyes at that but his wish to survive the night was stronger than any inclination of how over the top he sounded.

Bark. Bark. The wolf threw itself to the ground, rolled onto its back, and knocked on the ground with its tail. Knock. Knock. Knock. Knock. Knock. Knock. Knock. Billy started to laugh, dry and relieved. It echoed through the dark forest, prompting the wolf to join in with rough barks.

‘Wait, before I climb back down – is that what Nancy does? She gives you a potion or puts a spell on you and the big bad wolf turns into a...giant puppy?’

The wolf nodded, if Billy wasn’t mistaken. He drew a breath in and held it while he climbed down the tree until he could just drop to the ground. For a moment, both of them just stared at each other. The wolf really was as tall as Billy with thick fur and a snout big enough to fit Billy’s head in.

‘Uhm, hi...Steve,’ Billy stretched out a hand, the wolf came slowly closer, bringing its nose close enough to sniff at it, ‘I guess you are a bit like a dog in this form?’

A rough, warm tongue licked over his palm, tickling his skin even more than it did anyway. Billy shook his head, stepping closer to Steve and running his hand through the thick fur.

‘Why are people scared of werewolves again?’

In response, Steve nudged him with his snout. Billy's eyes widened as a thought crossed his mind he had not been expecting to think about a huge werewolf.

'Oh God, you really are just a giant puppy! Steve, you're a pup who needs their stroking and petting session and attention! Now, aren't you a good boy?'

Billy began to do the only thing that seemed to make sense to him in this situation: he stroked and petted the wolf sitting in front of him, digging his fingers into the fur and ruffling it up. Steve seemed to press up against him, fitting his head into the hand caressing him. His big eyes kept watching Billy's every move as he stepped back to look at him in his ginormous entirety.

'Fuck, Harrington, you are huge,' Billy felt his breathing stutter, swallowed around the lump blocking his throat for a moment, and rubbed at his face with his hands, 'A huge, fluffy -'

The wolf lunged at him. Billy was knocked to the ground, for a moment it felt like any air had been squeezed out of his lungs, then he realized that a huge, heavy paw pressed down on his chest. His field of vision was filled with fur and teeth, the wolf loomed over him with its snout open, showing the sharp rows of teeth in there. Pants of hot air hit Billy's face, making him hold his breath for a moment.

'You smell of dog,' he then spit out, trying to convey a fearlessness that was more than far away from his mind at that moment.

Steve had surprised him and even though he didn't believe he would die that night, a slight worry had crept up on him. He had walked up to a werewolf voluntarily, maybe that had been a mistake, he had not even thought about the wolf being a different sentient being, detached from Steve Harrington. Looking up, he could still see the wolf's eyes, they were the same warm brown eyes he knew, just slightly bigger and widened.

The tense moment was broken when the wolf dragged his tongue across his face. Billy tried to get up, only prevented from it by the paw firmly placed on his body that forced him to lie back down.

‘You really are a force to be reckoned with, aren’t you?’ Billy lifted his arm and petted the wolf’s neck, ‘May I get up? I even promise not to call you “fluffy” again, is that what you want?’

The wolf stepped off his chest, Billy scrambled to his feet and tackled him. Steve threw his head back and howled out in glee, he rolled onto his back and let Billy straddle his soft tummy. Billy accepted the invitation and settled in the lighter, softer fur on Steve’s belly. Judging by the way his tail began to wag, Steve liked belly rubs as much as any dog Billy had met. He took it onto himself to treat every square inch to rubs and strokes until Steve was panting and his tail wagged delightedly, whirling up pine needles from the ground.

His fingers ruffled through the thick, long fur, marvelling at its softness. Billy could feel the wolf’s body heat and let his arms rest against the giant body underneath him. Steve lifted his head, pushed it forward, and licked over Billy’s outstretched hand that he had extended to meet the snout with a pet.

‘I’m cuddling with a werewolf,’ Billy felt Steve breathe, it calmed him down in a way he hadn’t imagined to feel, ‘How crazy is that? Cuddling with a werewolf!’

More than that, the soft fur on his skin calmed the tingling sensation his nerve endings pushed onto him, making him forget about it. Pleased with the way he had Steve coming up to meet the hands petting, Billy dug his fingers deep enough to scratch skin. A shiver ran through Steve’s body, intense enough to unsettle Billy on top of him. He fell forward, landing face first in Steve’s fur.

The wolf huffed out a warm breath before rolling to his side, prompting Billy to slide from his belly. He didn’t hit the ground, however, because big paws caught him, pressing him into the wolf’s side. It took him a moment to realize that Steve had curled up around him on the ground, forming the warmest place imaginable in the middle of the woods. Billy settled against his paws, too tired and exhausted to do anything else after the initial rush of adrenaline had worn off. The warmth Steve gave off kept him enveloped and safe, wrapped up in what he would have described as the most comfortable blanket he had ever felt.

Falling asleep was too easy with Steve breathing consistently next to him, huffs of breath ghosting over his face. At first it was closing his eyes for a moment to enjoy the comfort. Then it was breathing along to Steve's calm breathing. Eventually, it was the bliss of restful sleep.

Waking up was cold. Billy moaned in discomfort and tried to chase the last traces of warmth he could sense, curling up into a ball and fidgeting around. A small sound from somewhere to his right let him open his eyes wide. There had been a groan, soft and faint enough for him to almost miss hearing it. He lifted his head from the ground, peering around for the source of the sound.

A moment later, he was up on his feet, one hand in his hair, the other trying to muffle the scream building up in his throat. He stared down again, this time not from a tree down onto a giant wolf, but from shaky legs down onto the naked body of Steve Harrington. Billy realized that he had missed the chance to think about what happened once the full moon disappeared or set again. Had he really expected for Steve to be wearing clothes? He had taken off his jacket and shirt, Billy remembered, looking around for the clothes the other boy had shed the previous night.

Before he could find them, however, Steve whimpered and stirred on the ground. Without thinking, Billy took off his leather jacket and threw it over him. All it did was jerk Steve awake suddenly. He sat up, panting, his hair a tangled mess with leaves and twigs in it.

'Billy?' he rubbed his eyes and yawned, 'What are you doing? What time is it?'

Billy peered at his wrist watch, 'Eight thirty. Are you...are you cold?'

Steve looked up at him and shuddered, 'A bit? I'm naked, for fuck's sake, of course I'm cold.'

'What should we do?' Billy raked his fingers through his hair, ruffling it up.

'Don't be a wuss, Billy. This is not the first time I've come here to transform. I have done this more than two hundred times now,' Steve got up slowly, wrapping Billy's jacket around his shoulders.

Billy felt the warmth of a blush spread on his cheeks as Steve toddled towards him, shaking and staggering like a fawn. He reached out by instinct. Pulling Steve against his chest he wrapped his arms around the other boy and held him upright.

‘Okay, relax! No worries, no hurry, I’m here to help you. What are we doing?’

‘I...I have a stash of clothes here, in a hollow tree. Over there,’ he nodded towards the tree next to the one Billy had sat in hours earlier.

Billy decided to cut corners. He lifted Steve up and carried him across the clearing, Steve clung to his neck, still shivering in the cold autumn air.

‘How do you do this every month?’

‘Not every month. I get to have a break when there is no moon showing. My father invested into the most expensive meteorological forecast service to predict whether or not there will be clouds covering the moon. Nancy...Nancy and Jonathan help me, she puts a spell on me that deactivates the whole bloodthirsty monster stuff. Hopper knows, he helps keeping it a secret.’

‘Good to have a dragon on your side, right?’ Billy helped Steve settle against the tree and climbed up into the treetop. He did indeed find a plastic bag with clothes, pulled underwear, a pair of jeans and a pullover out, and dropped to the ground.

Steve got dressed and seemed to warm up by the minute once he was wearing the pullover. Something had changed, however. When he looked at Billy he smiled, extending one hand with the jacket.

‘Keep it for the moment, you are still shaking,’ Billy turned and started to walk into the woods.

‘That’s not the cold,’ Steve’s quiet words let him halt again, ‘that’s the repercussions of the transformation.’

‘You mean –’

‘I couldn’t hold a cup if I wanted to,’ Steve sighed and took a few

small steps, 'Nancy and Jonathan give me their notes if the night of a full moon falls onto a school night.'

'That's it,' Billy scooped Steve back up into his arms, 'Be thankful you don't weigh more than Max. Is there anything I can do for you?'

Steve snuggled up to him, curling his lanky body into a tight ball, 'Just drive me home, okay?'

'Uhm –'

'I smelled your car on the way up here; heightened senses, you could try your best hiding it and I will still find it.'

'You too?' Billy blurted out, 'Heightened senses, I mean? But yes, I'll take you home. And then? Do you need to eat?'

Steve shook his head, 'Thank you, by the way.'

'You ate my bait?'

'Of course I did. Tasted good – did you buy it when I met you at the shop yesterday?'

Billy almost tripped over his own feet.

He got to the car before his arms exhausted, he managed to bundle up Steve in his jacket and a blanket he kept in the trunk before getting behind the wheel. He started the car and drove back onto the street.

'So, you sense Supernaturals?'

'Looks like it.'

'But why?'

'Nancy had no idea.'

'Do you have any supernatural blood in your family? Grandparents, maybe?' Steve raised his eyebrows.

'No idea. My dad's family is normal, bordering on boring. Mum as



well. The whole Callas family is dead now –‘

‘Did you just say Callas?’ Steve sat up and fixated Billy, ‘Callas as in Alethia and Ianthe Callas?’

‘Okay, that is creepy. How do you know my grandma and mum?’ Billy hit the brakes.

‘Uhm – they used to live down the road. Mum kept a few photos of her and Ianthe. They went to school together! Mum used to complain why she got a werewolf through Dad’s side of the family when Alethia and Ianthe both were nymphs.’

‘You’re not trying to tell me that my mum was a nymph, Harrington, right? My mum met my dad in California! Not Hawkins!’

‘She moved away,’ Steve rubbed his temples, ‘Alethia died and Ianthe left. You can ask Hopper, he must have known them, too! And it does make sense, a nymph’s powers are inherited only on the female side of a family. But you still have her blood, that has to be it! That’s the explanation for that weird sensing thing of yours!’

Billy started the engine up again.

They drove the rest of the way in silence. As soon as Billy pulled up in front of Steve’s house, the door was opened and a women stepped outside, onto the porch. She came towards the car, wrapped in a sheer dressing gown with a few curlers in her hair.

‘Baby – baby, what happened, who is that?’

‘That’s Billy Hargrove, Mum,’ Steve unwrapped himself and opened the car door, ‘he is Ianthe Callas’ son.’

‘That is not explanation whatsoever,’ Mrs. Harrington gave Steve a cuddle, seemingly trying to lead him away, ‘let’s get you inside, warm, and fed.’

‘Mum, I’m dressed, Billy gave me his jacket and something to eat,’ Steve looked so uncomfortable that Billy decided to step in.

He got out of the car, walked around the hood and extended his

hand, booting up his charms, 'Hello Mrs. Harrington, Steve tells me you knew my mum?'

The woman blinked, looked from Billy to Steve and back, and began to smile, 'Uhm, yes, actually. Why don't you help Steve inside, he needs to rest for a bit but you are very welcome to stay!'

Billy returned the smile, yet the way Steve rolled his eyes did not escape his notice.

'At least she let you come in here and stay with me,' Steve closed the door to his room and sat down on his bed, 'That's just because you are practically family through your mother.'

'Family?' Billy still looked around, scanning Steve's room for anything that would tell him something about the other boy.

'Well, not really,' Steve blushed, 'I mean, she trusts you a bit more because of it. She would still kill you, if you told anyone about -'

'Is that your way of warning me?' Billy sat down on the ground in front of Steve, 'And don't you need to rest?'

'My body apparently decided that not waking up alone is relaxing enough. I didn't have to burn all energy to keep warm tonight.'

'Are you suggesting you sometimes fall asleep alone up there without anything keeping you warm?' Billy scooted closer to Steve who was now inspecting his hands, 'You don't mean you wake up naked in the snow, right?'

Steve's lack of an answer was enough for Billy to tear his hair out.

'If you think I will let that happen ever again, think again! From now on I will be there with you, I will make sure you are warm and I will take fucking care of you, you...huge ball of fluff!'

Billy felt himself rise to his knees, practically pushing his face up towards Steve who sat on the edge of his bed stone still. He breathed fitfully, his eyes were wide and glazed. His panted breaths hit Billy's

face just like the wolf's had, just hours earlier. Warm air left quivering, plush lips.

'Steve?'

'Yes?'

'I'm want to kiss you.'

'Stop talking,' Steve tangled his fingers in Billy's hair and pulled him closer.

When his lips crashed onto Steve's, he thought about how he would never again let him go. He made himself promise to carry this boy to all ends of the world before he would let anything separate them. The warmth he had felt with the wolf sloshed over him, drowning him in the need to feel Steve closer; feel him wherever he went. He pushed up, into Steve's hold around him and an embarrassingly needy sound escaped his mouth.

Steve broke the kiss to smile at him, 'Did you feel that as well?'

Billy managed nothing more than a breathless nod.

'That was the last token of you having nymph blood. We just imprinted on each other,' Steve whispered and dragged his teeth over Billy's outer ear, 'Now you'll never get rid of me.'

Winded as he was, Billy didn't manage to tell him that this was exactly what he wanted. Instead, he curled up on the bed with Steve, exchanging lazy kisses and giving in to the fatigue no creeping up on them again.

**Author's Note:**

I'm on tumblr: @edgy-fluffball